

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name ALEXANDER WATSON BATTE HOUSEother names/site number The Old Place, DHR File No. 40-02

2. Location

street & number S side SR 612, 1500 ft. W of jct. SR 651 N/A ☐ not for publicationcity, town Jarratt ☒ vicinitystate Virginia code VA county Greensville code 081 zip code 23867

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Director, VA Dept. of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

April 25, 1991In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence: Agricultural
Outbuilding

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

Agriculture/Subsistence: Agricultural
Outbuilding**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood

roof Metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Built between 1815 and 1835, and located on state Route 612 in Greenville County, the Alexander W. Batte House is a one-and-a-half-story hall-parlor house built on a fieldstone foundation. A massive chimney of fieldstone is located at each end of the house. Two windows and a door are asymmetrically positioned on the north facade. The south elevation, also of three bays, possesses two doors and a window. The site, atop a high rise of ground which is approached via a curving lane, adds to the perception of the house being very high and narrow.

The nomination consists of two contributing buildings, the main house and an early nineteenth-century barn. A late-nineteenth century family cemetery is considered non-contributing since it does not fall within the period of significance. A modern dwelling is counted as a non-contributing building.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Alexander W. Batte House, a one-and-a-half-story modest frame dwelling, sits upon a stone foundation with exterior stone chimneys at each end. Some of the original beaded weatherboard survives as does a boxed cornice. Decorative endboards reflecting the general cornice profile and flared eaves provide a touch of style to the exterior design.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c1815-1835

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Alexander W. Batte House, which is located in Greenville County, is a rare example of a hall-parlor-plan dwelling. The architectural evidence suggests that Batte constructed the house in two building campaigns between 1815 and 1835. The simple design of the house and its modest size suggest that Batte, who was a large landowner, declined--unlike many in his economic class--to invest his capital in an ostentatious dwelling. Few such small houses have survived in this part of Southside Virginia. The Batte House, together with an antebellum barn that stands nearby, offers an intriguing look at an early nineteenth-century Southside farmstead.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Alexander Watson Batte, who built the Batte House between 1815 and 1835, inherited the land upon which the house stands from his father, William Batte. The elder Batte purchased the property from Richard Cocke and Adam Tapley in November 1778. When he died in 1789, William Batte left it to his widow Sarah during her lifetime, and after her death to Alexander W. Batte. The tract first was referred to as The Old Place in documents filed with the county court clerk by Sarah Batte in 1789.

The architectural evidence suggests that Alexander W. Batte constructed the house in two stages between 1815 and 1835. He also built the nearby barn, probably during the same period. The supporting evidence offered by the county tax records is inconclusive. Batte owned several tracts that contained buildings; the county tax commissioner appears to have been lax in recording changes in housing stock.

Alexander W. Batte died about 1853. His heirs sold the property to James Brown, a prominent local planter, merchant, and land speculator, in December 1853. Brown eventually acquired more than 1,400 acres of land,

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

VA Dept. of Historic Resources
Richmond, VA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 45.5 acres

UTM References

A 18 27 2 2 4 0 4 0 7 5 7 0 0
Zone Easting Northing

C 18 27 1 7 4 0 4 0 7 5 4 1 0

B 18 27 2 1 4 0 4 0 7 5 3 2 0
Zone Easting Northing

D 18 27 1 8 2 0 4 0 7 5 8 4 0

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 18/272240/4075700, B 18/272140/4075320, C 18/271740/4075410, D 18/271820/4075840.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the main farmhouse and barn that have historically been part of the Batte House complex.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William M. Pruett

organization _____

date March 1991

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town Emporia

state VA

zip code 23847

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

The house was built in two sections. The earlier or eastern section, built sometime between 1815 and 1835, consists of one room and an attic on a high cellar to which there was access only from the outside. The foundations and chimneys have recently been rebuilt due to deteriorated mortar.

All framing members are hewn and pit sawn, the nails are machine-headed cut nails, and the trim is of Federal-era design. Other evidence of two-stage construction is seen in the interior sill, differences in the levels of the flooring in the two first-floor rooms, differences in trim, and the evidence of gable weatherboards on an interior rafter pair. The second section must have been built relatively soon after the first because it too contains all of the era-defining features noted above. Although much of the framing in the second section was reused as many as three times, it is still likely that the addition was also built in the 1815-1835 period.

The original one-room dwelling contained a pair of front (north) and rear (south) doors and windows. The windows had simple beaded casements on the exterior; no interior trim survives. (Stored in the barn are several sash that are mortised and tenoned together and contain narrow Federal-style muntins.) Both doorways are framed in three-part architrave trim; the front doorway has fairly conventional Federal cyma moldings similar to those used in both sections of the house. The rear door is trimmed with beaded caveto moldings, another typical Federal feature. Both doors have raised panels on the exterior and plain faces on the interior; both are hung on HL hinges secured with screws and cut nails with leather washers. All first-floor doors originally had surface-mounted box locks.

The walls of the first-floor room in this early section were originally plastered and although the evidence is inconclusive, may have had a chair rail. An early beaded baseboard survives that is similar to that used throughout the rest of the house in both construction periods. An original stair from the main floor to the attic room remains largely intact despite later modifications. In its original form the stairs were enclosed with a plaster soffit and trimmed in wood cornerboards. The treads, risers, and skirting all appear to be original, as well as the flush-board wainscoting that runs to the west side of the front door at the foot of the stair, but does not appear to have continued around the room.

The addition of the room to the west converted the building to a small hall-parlor plan house. This room is smaller than the earlier room and has only a rear (south) entrance, but it is trimmed with a flush-board wainscot capped with a wide beaded chair rail. Both first-floor rooms are heated with fireplaces.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

The attic was revamped, apparently at the time of the addition. In its remodeled state, the kneewalls, underside of the rafters, and collars were plastered. Both rooms above the stairs were entered through rosehead, wrought-nailed, hand-planed board-and-batten doors that are beaded on the passage face. The doors are hung on small HL hinges and secured with screws and wrought rosehead nails (one of these doors has the scribe marks for the nailing pattern of the battens). The door jambs and baseboards are simply beaded boards. The flooring, as in the rests of the house, is gauged and undercut heart pine, random-width boards. The undercutting of these floorboards seem to point to an early nineteenth century date, since this technology was abandoned fairly early in the century. The west room above the stairs retains its original brick hearth.

Approximately seventy-five to one hundred feet west of the Batte House is a large depression that suggests the location of an outbuilding. Approximately two hundred yards to the west is large barn that dates to the early nineteenth century.

The barn possesses most of its original beaded weatherboard. All of the interior flooring, stairs to the loft, and support beams are original to the time of construction of the house. It is constructed of hewn and straight-sawn timber and machine-cut nails. Like the house, it is traditionally framed, utilizing mortise-and-tenon joints for the wall systems and rafter pairs.

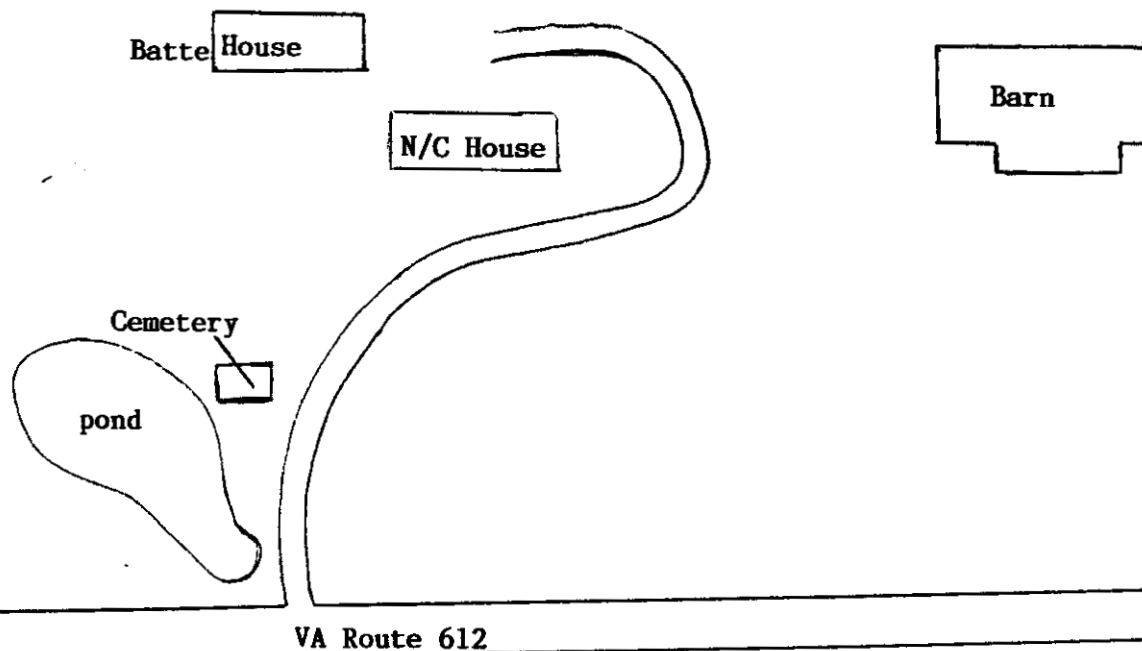
The barn possesses two front doors, and a joint in the first-floor space suggests an original layout of two rooms. While both doors are board-and-batten types with wrought nails, they are not original to the building. They feature a wooden box lock with double throw bolts, butts boards beaded on the exterior face, and a variety of wrought hardware, especially a wrought hasp that was made to conform to the profile of the door jamb. An original sheathed kneewall implies that the attic of the barn served the function of grain storage. The barn's northern and western sheds are floored in cobblestones to form a drainage system.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Batte House, Greensville County, Virginia



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

and operated stores at Hicksford and in nearby Sussex County. His farming operations were centered on tobacco, wheat, and pork.

Brown died in 1855 and left the tract containing the Batte House to his son, James David Feilding Brown. Because the young Brown was only nine years old and an orphan, the property was managed by a court-appointed guardian, Henry Jarratt, who hired an overseer to operate the farm. After the Civil War, in which Brown likely served, he attended Washington College, graduating in 1869. He later was graduated from the law school at the University of Virginia, but chose to become a Baptist minister. In 1874 he sold the Batte House tract to Isham Roland, of North Carolina.

In 1881 Alexander Rae, a native of Scotland who emigrated to Virginia after the Civil War, purchased the tract from Roland. He was one of a large number of Scots who had settled in northwestern Greenville County with the encouragement of Virginia immigration officials, who looked to foreign-born laborers to fill the labor shortage created by Emancipation.

Rae sold the property in 1882 to John Cowie, a stonemason who was his brother-in-law. After Cowie's death in 1895 the farm remained in the hands of his descendants until Frances Goodrich Webb bought it in 1951. Webb sold it in 1956 to Edward A. and Sarah W. Squire, who conveyed it to their son and his wife, Peter W. and Nancy B. Squire, in 1974. Recognizing the significance of the house, the Squires have begun a careful restoration. They also have transformed the property into an active, working farm once more.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Architectural Survey File 40-2. Department of Historic Resources.
Richmond, Va. (DHR).

Auditor of Public Accounts. Land Tax Books. Greenville County. 1782-
1850. Archives Branch, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Va.
(VSL&A).

Auditor of Public Accounts. Personal Property Tax Book. Greenville
County. 1815. VSL&A.

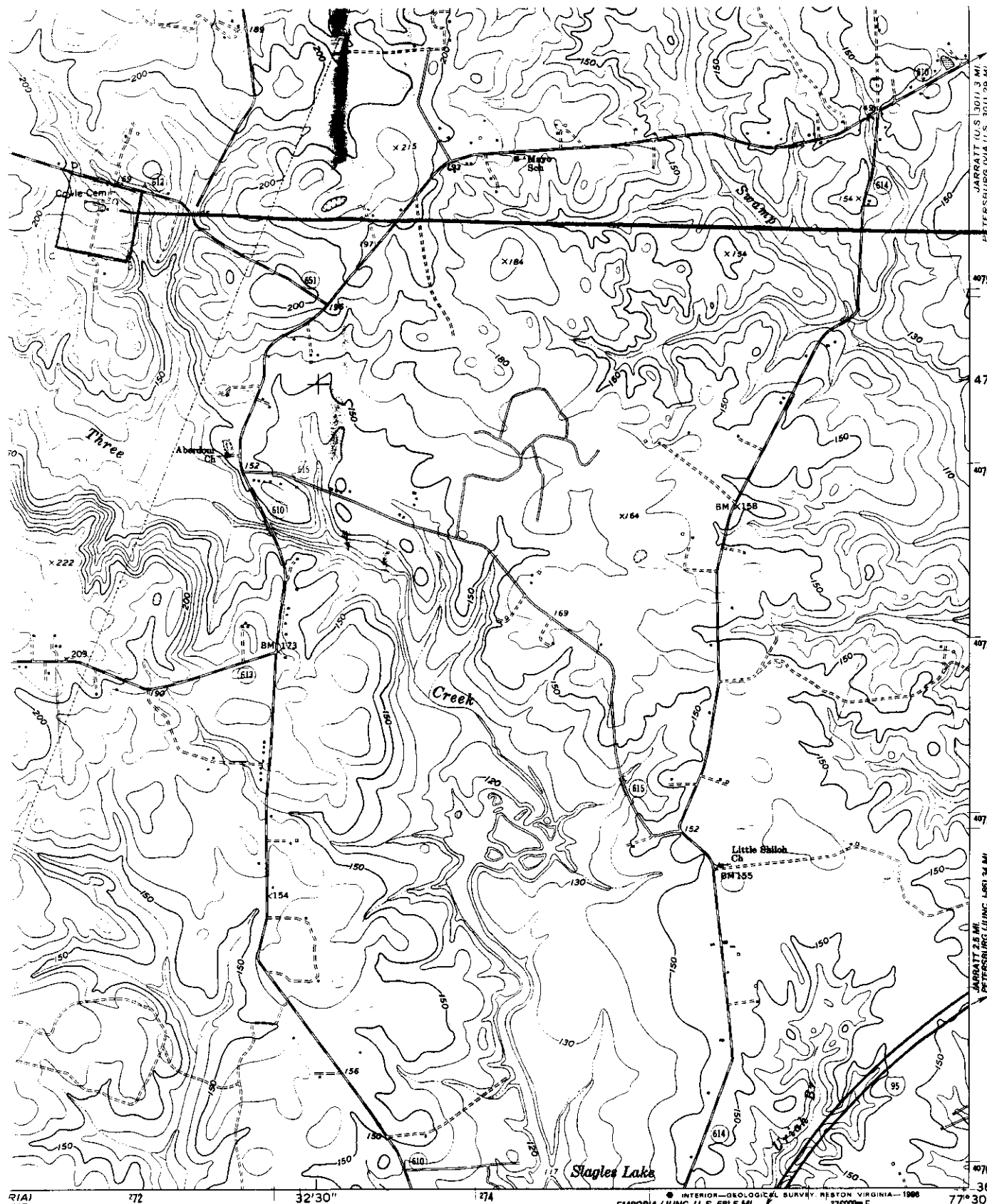
Brunswick County. Deed Book 13. VSL&A.

Graham, Willie. Architectural Description and Analysis, The Old Place. 11
May 1985. DHR.

Greenville County. Deed Books 13, 60, 68, and 107. Greenville County
Courthouse, Emporia, Va.

Greenville County. Deed Book 9. VSL&A.

Greenville County. Will Books 1 and 8. VSL&A.



JARRATT U.S. 3011.3 MI.
PETERSBURG VIA U.S. 3011.29 MI.

47°30"

4075

4074

4073

4072

4070000m N.

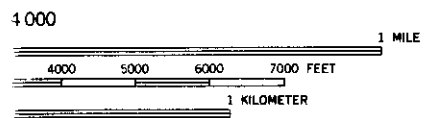
36°45'

77°30"

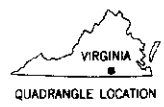
JARRATT 2.5 MI.
PETERSBURG (JUNC. I-86) 34 MI.

Butte House
DHR 40-2
A 18/272240/407570
B 18/272140/4075410
C 18/271740/4075410
D 18/271820/4075840

71A1 NE 772 32°30" 274



AL 10 FEET
CAL DATUM OF 1929



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

PURDY, VA.

36077-G5-TF-024

1963
PHOTOREVISED 1986
DMA 5457 I SE-SERIES V834

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
JRVY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
RCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
NO SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST